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THE
NEW CREATION

A
STATE of PROSELYTISM:

A
SERMON

PREACHED IN
His Majesty's Chappel at *Whitehall*:

On Sunday the 10th of February 1739-40.

K.
By JOHN GARNETT, B. D.

Fellow of *Sidney Sussex* College in *Cambridge* ;
Chaplain to his GRACE the Duke of *Devonshire* ;
And one of the Preachers at the said Chappel.

ΕΡΕΤΝΑΤΕ ΤΑΣ ΓΡΑΦΑΣ.

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Printed for STEPHEN AUSTEN, at the *Angel* and *Bible* in
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THE
NEW CREATION

STATE OF BROOKLYN

SEERMON



JOHN GARNETT, D.D.

Editor of the "British Museum" Catalogue
and of the "British Museum" Library

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TO THE
MOST NOBLE,
WILLIAM,
DUKE of *Devonshire*,

Marquiss of *Hartington*, Earl of *Devonshire*, and
Baron *Cavendish* of *Hardwick*, Lord Lieute-
nant of the Kingdom of *Ireland*, Lord Lieu-
tenant and Custos Rotulorum for the County
of *Derby*, one of the Lords of his Majesty's
most honourable privy-Council, one of the
Governors of the *Charter-House*, and Knight
Companion of the most noble Order of the
Garter.

My LORD,



IF I have but your Grace's Par-
don for the Liberty here taken,
I am sure to be justified to the
Publick as to the Propriety of
inscribing the following Sheets to Your

The DEDICATION.

Grace— The Subject of them is that *religious* Error and Delusion, which has not only misled private Persons and weak Minds, but threatned even Communities and national Happiness: to the *Rulers* therefore of the *People* it must be reasonable to address every Performance design'd for the Reformation of *public* Grievances, and when these are found to affect the Peace of the *established Church* the Appeal cannot be deem'd by any Man irregular, when made to the immediate Representative of our great DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

Whether indeed the Infection here guarded against has reach'd that Kingdom more particularly under Your Grace's Command, I know not; but if it have not, if *they who have turn'd this Part of the World upside down* be not as yet come to You, that may very well be look'd upon as one of the many

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many Blessings of Your Grace's Administration, under which *Religion* is sure to be as effectually secur'd against *Enthusiasm*, the accidental Growth of most Countries, as against *Popery*, the natural Produce of *that* over which You preside, to be adorned by Example, as well as enforc'd by Authority; and preserv'd in its full Vigor and Interests, and not in the *Form* and Appearance only.

IT was the Sense of these important Services evidently in Your Grace's Inclinations as well as Power that occasion'd the universal Joy among all good Men, when they saw You call'd to that high Station, which they reasonably promis'd themselves You wou'd fill with equal Dignity, as You have confessedly discharg'd the Duties of it with the greatest Glory.--- Your Grace's judicious Conduct in the Capacity of a Subject gave a glorious Earnest to Mankind

The DEDICATION.

kind of the many Blessings they might expect from such eminent Qualities when invested with a public Character, for the same steady Politics which You had copied from an honest * Motto of one of Your illustrious Ancestors in order to form the good Subject could not fail of constituting an excellent *VICE-ROY*.---Your Grace indeed has made a noble Improvement upon the former of his Maxims, having reconcil'd the two Characters of the *good Subject* and the *good Governour* in Your own Person, and shewn the World how very consistent the Art of *ruling* is with the true and honourable Measures of *Obedience*; and if the great Moderation of the present Times has happily precluded You the literal Execution of his whole Plan, yet Your Grace has manifestly adopted it in a Sense the most amiable and interesting hav-

* *Fidelis bonorum Principum Subditus, Inimicus & invisus Tyrannis.*

ing

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ing testified Your Aversion to Tyrants by your Abhorrence of the Principles that form them, and your Contempt of the Favour and Countenance of *bad* Princes by ever courting the Approbation and Esteem of the *best*.

COULD any Consideration add to the Opinion Mankind has deservedly conceiv'd of Your Grace's Happiness in the Possession of so many public good Qualities it must be *that* of those domestic Felicities Your Grace enjoys in the best of *Consorts*, the confess'd Pattern of all that Virtue and splendid Oeconomy so truly amiable in *high* Life, because so necessarily connected with a most visible Influence upon *lower* Fortunes, in the best of *Children*, those *Arrows in the Hands of the Mighty*, and in the best *Alliances*, the infallible Signs of superiour Worth and Excellence.

THAT

The DEDICATION.

THAT Your Grace may long continue the happy Favourite of the Age You live in, the steady Patron of that *established* Religion, Learning, and Liberty, which your Ancestors so *bravely* contended for, and so *greatly* preserv'd, the illustrious Example of all that Virtue and Humanity that *public* Spirit and *private* Candor which all Mankind at once confess and admire in Your Grace, is the hearty Wish and Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Grace's most Dutiful Servant,

and Chaplain,

Sidney College Cambridge,
April 26. 1740.

JOHN GARNETT.



G A L. VI. 15.

*In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision avail-
eth any Thing nor Uncircumcision, but a
New Creature.*



THAT the Design of *Christ's* coming into the World was *not to destroy the* Matth. v. 17.
Law, but to fulfil it, was a Declaration which he himself was pleas'd to make in order to rectify any Mistakes which his Disciples might have run into concerning the new Kingdom he was about to erect among them: To obviate all such he informs them, that the Reformation of the *Jewish* Oeconomy, and not the Destruction of it, was the Errand he was sent upon, that the *Moral Law* particularly was of that eternal and indispensable Obligation, that *whosoever should break one* Ver. 19.
of the least of its Commandments should be accounted the least in the Kingdom of God; to repeal therefore that
B Law.

Law, or to cancel any one of its Precepts, was so far from the Design of that *Gospel* he was about to preach, that to establish it upon a more sure and lasting Foundation, to secure the Observance of it by an express Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, and those too not temporal (as they had been under the Law) but infinite and eternal, to improve and advance it to a greater Degree of Perfection both in Theory and Practice, than had ever been taught by the great Masters and Doctors in the *Jewish* Church, and lastly, to extend the Practice and Obligation of it throughout the whole World, and make it the sole System to which all Nations might recur, and by which they should consequently be judg'd, was the Substance of that Commission which he had receiv'd from the *Father*, and under which he was to transact the great Business of Man's Redemption.

AS to the ritual or ceremonial Part of the *Law*, that had been manifestly calculated for the Temper of that People, and *that* only, for which it was ordain'd, and their particular Situation with Regard to other Nations, either to secure them from communicating with them and mixing in their Idolatries, or to enforce the Obedience of a *rebellious stiff-necked Generation* not to be tamed with less Severity, nor reduced to any tolerable Submission by Treatment of a milder Nature. This Part therefore of their Oeconomy, as it was peculiar to them, must of Consequence expire with them, and not revive its Obligations under a new Face of Things, under a Kingdom whose Bounds were to reach *unto the Ends of the Earth*, under a Religion which knew of no Distinction

Distinction of *Jew* and *Gentile*, *Greek* and *Barbarian*, under a Governour who was *no Respector of Persons*. A formal Repeal therefore of those Ceremonies seems neither to have been necessary nor expedient, the Institution of a more universal, rational, and manly Scheme virtually implied the Expiration of that which had served only as a *Schoolmaster to bring them to Christ*, and under which they had been as *Children under the Direction* Gal. iv. 2, 3, 4. of *Tutors and Governors until the Time appointed by the Father*, which is therefore emphatically stiled, *the Fulness of Time when God sent forth his Son*.

THE *Jews* indeed consistently enough with their usual Opinionatedness thought that by Virtue of their being the *Children of Abraham* to whom the Promise of the *Messiah* was made, they and they only had a Right to the Kingdom of God, it was therefore no Wonder to find it a Doctrine greatly insisted upon in the Infancy of *Christ's* Religion, that it was necessary even for the *Christian* Converts to be circumcised and keep the Law at least in this Particular; it had been a Rite instituted by *God* himself in the Covenant which He made with *Abraham*, rigidly observ'd by his Descendants for Four Hundred and Twenty Years, (abating the Forty Years Intermission during their Sojournment in the Wilderness,) renew'd in expresse Terms at the Giving of the *Law* by *Moses*, and continued from thence to the Time of our Blessed *Saviour*, the Authority of it had been recogniz'd by *Christ* himself, and the Practice of it submitted to in his Person: So that there was perhaps some Pretence either for insisting upon the Continuance of it in the *Christian* Church, or

The NEW CREATION, a

at least assigning a sufficient Reason for discontinuing it; this indeed *St. Paul* has done in the Epistle before us with equal Strength and Variety of Argument, he hath plainly shewn that the *ritual* Ordinances of the *Mosaic Law* are absolutely evacuated by the *Gospel*, and that *whosoever expected to be justified by the Works of the Law* was in that very Opinion fallen from Grace, and could therefore have no Pretence to the saving Effects of it, and moreover that *Christ* was upon that very Supposition become of no Effect, that those *Legal Performances*, which had indeed been formerly expedient as *Means* to bring them in God's due Time to *Christ*, had now no Place in a System which needed not such *Means*, as it was of a more refined and spiritual Nature, *for we*, says he, *through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith, for in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any Thing nor Uncircumcision, but a New Creature*, agreeably to what he tells the *Ephesians* on the very same Subject, that *Christ* had abolished in his *Flesh* the *Enmity*, or the old Grounds of Difference between the *Jew* and the *Gentile*, even the *Law of Commandments* contain'd in *Ordinances* for to make to himself one *New Man* so making Peace.

Eph. ii. 15.

WHAT therefore we are to understand by the *New Man* and the *New Creature*, from what Analogy they are so denominated, and how proper that Analogy is to express what *Saint Paul* would convey to those to whom he writes, and lastly in what consists the true Difference between the *new* and the *old Creation* shall be the Subjects of my present Enquiry.

FOR

FOR that this is an Expression not to be understood literally is, I suppose, a Matter beyond all Dispute, it requir'd neither the Sagacity nor the Learning of one of the *Jewish Doctors* to discern the absolute Impossibility of *entering a second Time into the Mother's Womb, and of being born again* in the physical Sense of the Words, the Thing carried its own Confutation along with it in the literal Interpretation, and was therefore to be understood in the figurative, if at all: But neither are Figures to be consider'd in the largest and most extensive Acceptation, 'tis sufficient that they answer in the general Parts to which the Writer himself refers, they are not to be stretch'd to every precise Similitude which a curious rather than a prudent Imagination may strike out, nor made Use of to prove Points which the Author himself hath not thought proper to produce them for: Otherwise there would be no End of Conjectures and Refinements, infinite Occasion would be given, or however taken, of enlarging upon every Allusion, and the *Scriptures* at last dwindle, as they have been in Danger more than once of doing, into Fable and Allegory.

THE most approved Rule of Interpretation in all such Matters, and it holds equally in sacred and profane History, is to compare the several Writings of those on the same Subject with one another, and parallel Places of the same Author together, and that Sense which best suits the several Passages thus compared bids fairest for the true One.

THUS

THUS then what St. Paul expresses in the Text by a *New Creature* he has explain'd to the *Ephesians* by a *New Man*, and this again is call'd by Saint John *being born of God*, as it is termed by St. Peter *being born again*: The Process of this *New Birth* or *New Creation* is elsewhere call'd the *Regeneration*, towards the unravelling of which *Mystery* so plain and intelligible in itself, and yet so little understood by some Men, and so confidently perverted and misconstrued by others, give me Leave to premise the following Observation.

Eph. ii. 15.

Joh. iii. 9, 10.

1 Pet. i, 2, 3.

Tit. ii. 5.

NOTHING can be more certain than that there is a visible Harmony among the inspired Writers in representing the grand Scheme of Man's Redemption by Christ, and of his Conversion by the Preaching of the Gospel, as analogous to his natural Birth, and that this * Analogy is conducted gradually through the several Stages of Generation, Conception and Production.

Jer. iv. 31.

Micah. iv.

9.

Ezai. lxvi. 7,

9.

IN the prophetic Writings we find the *Church of Christ* described as a Woman in Travail, and the sudden Propagation of Christianity over the World compared to the Quickness of her Delivery, *Before she travail'd she brought forth, before her Pains came upon her she was deliver'd of a Male Child*: And again, *Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day, or shall a Nation be*

* Analogy is here all along us'd not in the strict and proper Sense of the Word, but in a more loose and extensive One, for that Similitude or Correspondency in human Things which makes them proper Images and Representations of Things supernatural and divine to the Mind of Man.

be born at once? These are Events confessedly beyond the ordinary Course and Constitution of Things, and yet without Pain or Difficulty *as soon as Zion travail'd she was deliver'd of her Children.*

THAT this Manner of Expression is not peculiar to the Prophets whose Stile is indeed allow'd to be more sublime and abounding with Figures and Allusions than that of the Gospel, is so plain, that it might safely be affirm'd that the inspired Writers even affect this Analogy with great Uniformity and Minuteness. Thus if St. James has told us, that *of his own Will God hath begotten us by the Word of Truth,* and St. Peter *that he hath begotten us again to a lively Hope by the Resurrection of Christ,* St. Paul continues the Figure and tells the *Corinthians* that *in Christ Jesus he had begotten them through the Gospel,* as he elsewhere speaks of *One-simus whom he had begotten,* or converted to the Faith of Christ, *in his Bonds:* No Wonder therefore that we hear of Travail and Sorrow e'er the Children come to the Birth, that in order to complete this Part of the Process of the spiritual Birth, St. John should have a Vision of *a great Wonder in Heaven, a Woman cloathed with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet, and upon her Head a Crown of twelve Stars, and she being with Child cried travailing and pained to be delivered, and she brought forth a Man-Child.* Which Words manifestly allude to the infant State of the Church under Christ, and the Establishment of it by the Preaching of his Apostles, which is here beautifully compared to the Pains of a Woman in Child-Bed; agreeably enough to which Manner of speaking

St.

Ja. i. 18.
Pet. i. 13. 5.

Cor. iv. 15.

Philip. x.

Rev. xii. 1,
2, 3.

- 1 Pet. i. 23.

Tit. iii. 5.

Ἀμφοτέρως ΔΟΥΣΑΣΑ καὶ ἐμπλησασα γαλακτός. Th. Idyll. 24.

Postquam

wash'd with Water from the Pollutions which it had contracted in the Womb, so in this our spiritual Birth the Soul is purified by the *Spirit* (the Figure whereof in many Places of Scripture is Water) from the Stains and Pollutions of Sin: And this perhaps may serve to explain St. *Peter's* Distinction of that *Baptism* which alone is salutary in regard to our Souls, not the † *Αποθεσις Ρυτις Σαρκος*, the putting away the Filth of the *Flesh*, not that Sort of washing which was practised upon the Body, but what carried along with it something that related more immediately to the Soul, the Answer (or rather the Stipulation) of a good Conscience towards God. Should this Part of the *Analogy* be thought to need farther Explanation, we may go back to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, and there learn what was practis'd on the Human Body immediately after its Birth by that which he laments was not done to *Israel* in the same Circumstances. As for thy Nativity, says he, in the Day that thou wast born thy Navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed with Water to supple thee. No Eye was there to pity thee, and none to do any of those Things unto thee in the Day that thou wast born: alluding probably to which Practice, * our Hearts are said by St. *Paul* to be sprinkled in Baptism from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water.

Joh. iv. 14.
—vii. 37-39.

1 Pet. iii. 21.

xvi Ezek. 4,
5-9.

Heb. x. 22.

C

THUS

Postquam peperit, pueros lavare jussit, Nos occipimus,
Sed Puer ille quem ego lavi ut magnus est? Plaut. in Amphit.
See Mede's Diatrib. 18. St. Jerom on John iii. 4. Tertullian. de Baptismo, C. 5. Witzii Ægypt. L. 2. C. 16. Huet. Qu. Aln. p. 272.
† Ρυτις Macula vel Sordes quæ corpori adhæret. Suidas. *Δεινον γαρ ει εν καιρω καθαρσιως ρυτιωθισομαι*, Greg. de Baptismo.
* 1 Cor. vi. 11. *αλλ απελευσθητε αλλ ηγιασθητε*.

THUS minutely have the inspired Writers pursued the Analogy of the spiritual to the natural Birth, and thereby shewn the Derivation of the *New Creature* to have been originally from *God* by and through the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, as really and truly as one Man is said to be the Son of, or deriv'd from, another; nor do they stop here, but continue to carry on the same Similitude, for the *New Man* thus initiated into Christ's Religion by Baptism is now consider'd in the Relation of a Son, and is therefore stiled a *Son of God*, an *Heir of God*, and a *joint Heir with Christ*: Under this Character he receives the proper Nourishment of those tender Years, and is *fed with the sincere Milk of the Word*, the Reason of which St. Paul has assign'd, *For every one that eateth Milk is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is a Babe*, thus by Degrees advancing from *Strength to Strength* from less to greater Degrees of it, and being gradually inured to * stronger and more manly Food, he arrives from a long Subjection to Tutors and Governors during his Minority unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.

Gal. iii. 26.
Rom. viii. 16,
17.

1 Pet. 2, 2.
Heb. v. 13, 14.

Eph. iv. 13.

BY the *New Birth* therefore, or the *New Creation*, we are in general to understand Mens becoming Proselytes to Christ through Baptism, engaging thereby a steady Obedience to the Commands of the Gospel, entering into a *new Covenant* with God through the Mediation of his Son, and solemnly stipulating to be his most faithful

* Κυνήδιον τὴν σοφίαν σιτησόμεναι. Aristoph. in Plut.

faithful Serxants and Disciples, for *if any Man be in Christ he is a New Creature.*

2 Cor. v. 17.

W H A T indeed constitutes the true Difference between the *old* and the *new Creature* is a distinct Consideration, into which it may be Matter of great Use and Importance to enquire: It is sufficient, we know, to the Constitution of a perfect Man, that he is of a *reasonable Soul and human Flesh subsisting*; these may properly enough execute the Functions necessary to such a Life: But to the Composition of the *new Man which is formed after the Image of him that created him*, the reasonable Soul and bodily Organs are not sufficient, but the Union of the *divine Spirit* is absolutely necessary; for *Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*: Hence St. Paul exhorts the *Ephesians to be renew'd in the Spirit of their minds*, and earnestly prays to God for the *Thessalonians* that *their whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body*, the three essentially inherent Properties in the Constitution of the spiritual Man *may be preserv'd pure and blameless*. * Mens natural Powers and Faculties, how perfect soever, cannot, attain to supernatural Acquirements, *for that which is born of the Flesh is but Flesh*, and so must be content to act within the small Sphere of its own Powers, but *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*, and knows no

Eph. iv. 24.

Joh. iii. 4.

Eph. iv. 23.

i Thes. v. 23.

John iii. 6.

C 2

Bounds

* Cum Spiritus commixtus animæ unitur Plasmati, propter effusionem Spiritus, spiritualis & perfectus homo factus est: & hic est qui secundum Imaginem & Similitudinem factus est Dei: Si autem defuerit Animæ Spiritus, animalis est vere qui est talis & carnalis. Commixtio autem & unio horum omnium perfectum hominem efficit. Iren. l. 5. c. 6. See this Matter at large discuss'd by Bishop Bull, Vol. 3. last Tract.

Bounds to its Influence and Operations but Grace of God. It is therefore *the Spirit that quickneth the carnal Man dead in Trespasses and Sins*, giving, as it were, a new Principle of Action, and inspiring a more vital Ingredient into his Composition, for like the lewd Woman mentioned by St. *Paul* the carnal Man may be *dead even whilst he liveth*, and how great a Paradox soever this may seem at first Sight, yet upon Examination we shall find it founded upon Reason and Experience, for even whilst he has not only all the Signs of Life, Health, and Vigour, but exerts them with Briskness and Activity, he may still be lost to all true and rational Enjoyment of Life, to all Virtue and Decency the best Symptoms of his spiritual Welfare, to all Acts of Charity and Goodness the wholsomest Exercise of his rational Faculties, and so at length abandoned to those evil Courses *whose End is Destruction, and whose Paths lead down to the Gates of Death*: A Recovery from such a wretched Condition to a Life of Virtue and Liberty may with Propriety equal to the Elegancy of the Expression be called a * *new Birth* or a *new Life*, and the happy Persons thus recover'd *new Men* and *new Creatures*, the Expression itself was familiar to, and perhaps borrow'd from, the † *Jews* themselves, who called

* *Nasci* Veteres non solum putabant eos qui in hanc Lucem exibant, sed etiam qui honores amplissimos consequabantur, sic *Dies* dicitur *Natalis* S.S. Martyrum a gladio ad palmam vocatorum, cum a faucibus Erebi ad fasces Olympi evehebuntur. Jos. Laurent. in Nat. Vet. So *Cicero* in Orat. post Reditum, " *Natus* sum Consularis, " *Natalis* mei Reditus.

Quemadmodum inter Judæos *novum* Nomen Profelyto accessit, ita etiam *Natales* plane *novi*: Et velut jam primo creatus aut a cælo lapsus omnino *novus Homo* fiebat. Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. cap. 4.

Ita in Jure Cæsareo Servus dicitur *regenerari* qui natalibus restituitur in quibus initio omnes homines fuerunt, non in quibus ipse nascitur cum servus natus esset. Ibid.

So

led their Profelytes *new Men*, admitted them by Baptism, and * considered them as absolutely acquitted from all their former Relations and Kindred, and solely attach'd to their Church and Nation : On which Account probably it is, that our Saviour reproves *Nicodemus* for his Ignorance in this Particular, *Art thou*, says he, *a Master in Israel, and knowest not these Things?* One would have thought indeed that neither the Allusion itself so manifestly borrow'd from the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, nor the Phrases so trite and common among those of his own Nation could have escaped one of the Doctors of the *Jewish Church*, though the precise Application of it to the Christian Scheme might possibly do so; the Propriety of such an Allusion might not be discerned till the whole Scheme of Man's Redemption by Christ was open'd and admitted, which it does not appear to have been by *Nicodemus*, and consisted in that Analogy, which he did not readily discern, to the natural Birth, in which the Life we lead after we are born into the World and breathe the common Air is not more different from that sensitive one that we liv'd in the Womb, than the Life we engage to lead

So too among the *Athenians* we find a Custom of *regenerating* Persons who had been long look'd upon as dead, which is thus recorded by *Jos. Scaliger*, *Athenienses eos, quibus absentibus funus factum erat, non prius ædes ingredi patiebantur, quam per finum laxæ Stolæ Mulier eum demitteret, tanquam denuo renasci videretur, unde Δευτεροπτομοι vel Τριετοπτομοι dicuntur: Inde factum ut quos mortuos putaverant ex Orco eos rediisse dicerent. Not. in Pomp. Festum, in verbo Postliminium. For the Origin of which Custom, see Witsii *Egyptiac.* l. 2. c. 16.*

* So *Tacitus* speaking of those who had gone over to the *Jews* :
 " Nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere Deos, exuere patriam, parentes, liberos, fratres vilia habere. Tac. Hist. L. 5.
 † John iii. 10. See Selden de Jure Nat. p. 191. Wilk. Ed. Vol. I.

lead under the new Covenant and stipulated in Baptism is from that which We led before we took upon ourselves the Profession of *Christ's Religion*, the one at best conducted under the Influence of deprav'd Reason and impetuous Passions, the other under the immediate Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

HOW indeed or by what Steps the Spirit produces this prodigious Change in Mens Minds, or at what Time and under what precise Circumstances this wonderful Alteration is effected is a Matter rather of curious than useful Enquiry, 'tis sufficient that we may be infallibly assur'd of the blessed Effects of it without being immediately sensible of its Operations, and taste its delicious Fruits without having observ'd minutely the gradual Growth of them: No one, I suppose, ever affected to assign the precise Moment in which he became a living Creature, or pretended to recount with any Degree of Accuracy the several Stages of the Soul from its first Entry into the human Body to the Maturity of the reasonable Man; these are Matters of gradual unobserv'd Progress not subject to the Niceties of any Law or System, and much less therefore to the Discernment of the Person himself in whom the Progress is making; and as they depend greatly upon the Temperament, Genius, and Disposition of Mankind, they must for that Reason be as various as those are: * The same may be said too of the spiritual Life, for there is a spiritual as well as a natural

* This probably is the Foundation of the Reasoning of the *Royal Preacher*, Eccl. xi. 5. *As thou knowest not the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones grow in the Womb of her that is with Child, even so knowest thou not that God that worketh all.*

ral Infancy, and we are as properly said to *grow in Grace and the Knowledge of Christ*, as in Stature and human Learning; the Progress of the divine Life is here again strictly analogous to that of the human, and depends upon like, tho' not precisely upon the same, Circumstances, for as in this the Soul and its rational Faculties are frequently disconcerted by the tumultuous Passions arising from its intimate Union with the Body, *the Law of our Members waging War with the Law in our Minds, and bringing them into continual Subjection*, so in that unless there be a previous Fitness and Disposition in Men to receive this *divine Guest*, he will not *enter in and make his Abode with them*, when he has enter'd his Reception may not continue always agreeable, He may be *griev'd*, or perhaps *quenck'd*, his Influence may be either check'd by Mens Lufts and Passions, or totally extinguish'd by their habitual Immoralities, He then forsakes them and *leaves them to their own Inventions*: In both Cases the Progress of the active Principle is insensible, though the Effects of it are plain and obvious: This indeed appears more undeniable when applied to the Good and Virtuous, they feel not only inward Dispositions for Piety and Goodness, but outward Stregth and Ability to put them in practise, and like the reasonable Soul in pursuit of rational Objects are never so satisfactorily employ'd as in Exercises of Virtue and Religion; these Dispositions they experience and cherish within them though they be not able to assign either the Time or the manner of their having acquir'd them, 'tis sufficient that they know them by the Effects they have produc'd in them, and these they are sure must have

Rom. vii. 23.

Joh. iii. 8.

a Cause adequate to such a production : *The Wind*, says our blessed Lord, *bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every Man that is born of the Spirit*, i. e. "The Work of *Regeneration* carries with it a great Resemblance to what is observ'd of the Wind; for as we gather its blowing by the Sound and other Effects, though we do not see the Blast or Current, nor yet its Rise and Passage, so may a Child of God know assuredly that he is such by the Effects and Characters of that Relation, tho' he does not see the Spirit that *renews* him, though the Operations by which he is *renew'd* be such as fall not under the Observation of his Senses, nor is his own Mind perhaps conscious of many Things by which that Change was wrought in him. And it would be just as good Reasoning to deny that the Wind blows, because we cannot account for its Rise and Passage, *not know whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth*, as to doubt of the *Spirit's* having effected such a Change in us, because we saw not the *Spirit* itself nor attended particularly to the Operations of it.

NOT that our Wills are overaw'd, or our Understandings wholly unconcern'd in this Business of *Regeneration*, the Progress of the *new Man* thus raised up in us in Baptism is partly conducted by the *Holy Spirit*, the Promise of which is to all *without Exception* that will receive it, and partly left to his own Care and Management. This seems to be the Foundation of St. *Peter's* Reasoning where he observes, that *Baptism saveth us,*

us, but how? not as it is the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, not the external Ceremony of washing, but as it carried along with it the *Answer* or Stipulation of a good Conscience towards God. The two principal Ingredients in this Character are *Faith and Repentance*, both of them the immediate Result of the Exercise of those rational Faculties which God has implanted in us by Nature and perfected by Grace:— and the FAITH so often recommended in Scripture, and without which we have no Pretence to the glorious Appellation of the *Sons of God* is not a Belief of abstruse, speculative Truths, or mere Matters of Doctrine, for St. Paul has determined in this very Case that such a Faith *will profit us nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. much less is it an Assent of the Mind to the Truth of any Proposition upon sufficient Evidence, for in such Matters neither Religion nor Morality is concern'd, but 'tis the Belief of plain practical Truths and of the fundamental Articles of all Virtue and Piety, of the absolute Necessity of living *soberly, righteously and godly in this present World*, and all this ground- Titus. ii. 12. ed upon the express Declaration of God in what he has revealed to us by Christ, and enforc'd too by the particular Promise of a future State, such a Faith as is necessarily connected with Practice, *working by Love*, and so including the actual Performance of every Duty we stand engaged for either to God or our Neighbour.

REPENTANCE too, as it implies a due Sense of Sin and a stedfast Resolution of abandoning it for the future, of *putting off the old Man with his Lusts, and putting on the new Man which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness* is another necessary Property Colos. iii. 9.

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Rom. iii. 12. of the *new Creature*. For that *all have sinned and so come short of the Glory of God* is a Truth reveal'd indeed by *Scripture*, but confirm'd by woful Experience; the Privilege of Man's Birth since the Fall of our first Parents appears scarce equal to that which St. *Paul* indeed boasts of as one of the greatest in his political Capacity, *that he was born free*; by their Transgression Sin enter'd into the World, and ever since we are born with strong Propensions to it as that which is most agreeable to our corrupt Natures: But by our *new Creation* we are rais'd up from the Death of Sin to a Life of Righteousness, enabled to extricate ourselves out of that servile dangerous State in which a deprav'd Nature had engag'd us, are admitted into Covenant with God, renew'd by his *Holy Spirit*, cleans'd from all our Sins upon our sincere Repentance by the *Blood of Christ*, and re-instated in the Favour of an offended God, and made *Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Joh. i. 3. THIS then is properly that *new Creature* which alone *availeth in Christ Jesus*, this that *new Birth* without which no Man can *enter into the Kingdom of God*, as the Principles from whence it proceeds are *new* and different from these under which we pass'd our former Lives when we *were Servants to Sin*, so too are the Effects of it *new* and visible in the Reformation of Mens Minds to Virtue and Goodness, being *born not of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*.

THE Author of this *new Life* is not *Nature*, improperly so called, but the Holy Spirit, nor the Life itself an *animal* but a *spiritual* one; 'tis conducted not under

under the Influence of Lusts and Passions, but under the immediate Directions of a written Law dictated by and enforc'd with the Authority of the Divine Spirit, the Fruits thereof sufficiently declare its Divine Original, and its Purity the Principles on which 'tis founded. For whereas in an unregenerate State Men were Servants to Sin, they are now become Servants to Righteousness, as they were *shapen and conceiv'd in Iniquity*, " They are *now new* moulded and fashion'd, furnish'd with a " *new* Principle of Life and Action, act upon *new* " Views and Interests, have *new* Thoughts and Sentiments of Things, and *new* Rules for their Conduct, in a Word, with Respect to the Sons of God, *Old* 2 Cor. v. 17. *Things are pass'd away, and all Things are become new.*

HENCE then we may learn how great an Impropriety they are guilty of who speak of the *new Birth* as a State of Man entirely subsequent to his Baptism, as a sensible Operation of the Spirit working in them by Labour and Travail Night and Day. Allusions confessedly borrow'd from Scripture should be confin'd to the scriptural Acceptation of them, otherwise they become mere human Inventions; The *Scripture*, as has been shewn, have represented the grand Scheme of the Conversion of the World to *Christ* as analogous to Man's natural Birth, that Conversion is seal'd in Baptism, and God's Part of the Covenant executed therein, and at the same Time a solemn and express Stipulation made on the Part of Man for the Performance of *his*. Upon this he is strictly and properly said to be *born again*, because *born of Water and the Holy Ghost*, and therefore after this to assert the Necessity, or even the Possibility, of a New Birth is to advance a *Solecism* equal

at least to what *Nicodemus* objected to our Lord, there is not even in this Sense a Possibility for a Man to *be born again when he is old*, renew'd indeed he may be but not *regenerated*, as his Body may waste and be repair'd, but never new moulded and fashion'd over again from the Womb: Besides the * Phrases of *being in Labour and Travail*, of *Sorrows and Pains*, are manifestly abused when applied to the *inward* Conflict of the Persons converted, as they always, when referred to the *new Birth*, signify the *outward* Opposition and Difficulties encounter'd by the first Preachers of the Gospel: Thus our Saviour having foretold the Destruction of the Temple and the grievous Calamities that should precede it, adds, that these are only the (*Ἀρχὴ ὧδίνων*) *the Beginning of Sorrows*, for upon this the great Persecution was to ensue both of Christ and his Disciples, for then *shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you, and you shall be hated of all Men for my Name's Sake*: Which Words are again repeated in St. Mark upon the same Occasion.

Mat. xxiv.
9, 10.

Mark. xiii. 5.

HENCE also we may learn what Sort of Evidence it is that we may reasonably demand in Order to an infallible Conviction of our *new Creation*, not that of inward *Feelings* and *Experiences*, for of those it will be extremely difficult to convince either ourselves or others, neither that of the *inward Voice and Suggestions*,

* *Ἄδυνες* sunt isti cruciatus, ob quos clamabat Puerpera Ecclesia, & Persecutiones ill gravissimæ quas Ecclesia primitiva inter pariendum experta est, notum enim est tribulationes & Angustias parturientium doloribus assimilari. Mede in Rev. xii. 2. Gal. iv. 19.

gestions, for these are not always and by every Person distinguishable from the Motions and Operations of his own Mind, and may after all be nothing more than the Result of a constitutional Heat, or a sanguine Habit: We must therefore assign some other Evidence by which we may try the Spirits, whether they be of God? Let us therefore consider how it is that in the Experiments we make upon ourselves we form a proper Judgment of our bodily Health or of the Welfare of our Minds, what Sort of Evidence offers itself to convince us that we are well and hearty in both these Respects, and then apply the same Reasoning to our spiritual Welfare, and we shall find that we can arrive at equal Certainty in the latter as in the former: Whence is it that we pronounce ourselves in *good Health*, but from a cool Temperament, a regular Digestion, an even Pulse, and the Result of all these a vigorous Habit? Whence do we judge of the *Welfare of our Minds* but from a cool Head, clear Perceptions, and distinct Reasonings? The Reverse of all these constitutes ill Health and Indisposition: No more convincing Argument can be offer'd of a Man's Health and Vigour than that he actually perform'd without Pain or Fatigue an Exercise which in less than perfect Health and Spirits he could not have perform'd, nor any Conclusion more certain, than that he who composed a Book confessedly clearly and well written was at the Time he compos'd it in a good State of Mind. Apply the same Reasonings to the *spiritual Man*, and the same Conclusions may be drawn from them: For how shall he judge of his spiritual Welfare, but from the *Gifts of the Spirit*? And how shall he judge of those Gifts, *i. e.* whether he be in Possession of
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Gal. v. 22.

of them, but from the Effects they produce in him, of these he judges not by any immediate Suggestion of God's Spirit or his own, in which 'tis possible he may be deceiv'd, but by, what 'tis utterly impossible he should mistake, considering and reflecting upon those Graces which the Scriptures written under the infallible Guidance of the Spirit itself, declare to be the Fruits of it; such are, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness and Temperance*; he therefore who finds himself habitually, not accidentally, engag'd in the Practice of Virtue and Morality, (for of such Duties only the Apostle's Catalogue consists,) may very safely and confidently pronounce upon his spiritual Condition that 'tis good and well pleasing in the Sight of God, and draw to himself this comfortable Conclusion that he is one of *the Sons of God*.

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